

COMMISSION ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (RI)
ZONING DISTRICT**

BACKGROUND:

The City has been working on supporting the expansion of the ISU Research Park (Park) for the past year. The expansion area of the Park is approximately 180 gross acres (100 acres developable) located ¼ of a mile south of the intersection of Airport Road and University Boulevard (Attachment A Location Map). Within the past year, the City has annexed land, rezoned property to Planned Industrial, created an Urban Renewal Area, and started construction of improvements along University Boulevard and utilities to serve the area.

The Park is bordered by the Ames Municipal Airport to the east, agricultural land to the south, Highway 30 to the north, multi-family residential to the west, and highway oriented commercial to the northwest and northeast. (Attachment B Zoning Map)

The current Planned Industrial (PI) zoning of the expansion area matches the zoning of the existing Park. However, the vision for the expansion area is somewhat different than that of the office park PI zoning that is in place today. **The Park expansion is intended to create a business environment for innovation with a central commercial hub of activity as a resource and amenity to employees and businesses of the entire Park.** Some of desired uses of restaurants, recreation, and retail services are more commercial in nature than industrial uses and do not fit within the PI zoning. Additionally, PI zoning is a type of zoning that has standards that reinforce the look and character of a stand-alone office park development that does not fit the vision of walkable more intensely developed environment for the expansion area. Therefore, Council directed staff to create a new zoning district that is supportive of the vision for the future of the Park.

The ISU Research Park Corporation is non-profit development company governed by a board of directors and operated by professional staff. The Corporation, generally, owns the properties within the Park and works with individual companies for development, leasing, and management of building space. ISU Research Park Corporation has strong ties with Iowa State University faculty and staff, providing relationships and resources desired by research and development (R&D) oriented businesses.

The current Park is approximately 120 net acres with about 80% of the lot area developed or under development. (See Aerial Photo next page.) The Park has been built out over approximately 30 years in a traditional office park setting with mostly one-story buildings, large building setbacks, and wide roadways providing access to office, R&D, and small industrial uses. The vacant sites in the existing Park include one site along Airport Road and three sites along South Loop Drive.



Excerpt of the Park looking from the north, fall 2014.

Research Park Innovation Zoning District

Staff has prepared a zoning text amendment to create a new zoning district named the Research Park Innovation District (RI). The RI zoning is intended to be applied only to the expansion area, not the existing Park area. RI zoning includes similar industrial uses to PI zoning, but includes different allowances for commercial use and creates different development standards. The new zoning district is designed to match the vision of an area of innovation and collaboration. The ISU Research Park Corporation has worked together with the City for a common vision and intent for development in the expansion area (Conceptual Plan Attachment D). To articulate the vision for the expansion area and guide the use and development within the RI zoning district, it has the following purposes:

- (a) *Allow for mixing of use and interaction of people to foster a collaborative environment.*
- (b) *Create a node of activity around the Hub of the district.*
- (c) *Design development to promote the new innovation district by integrating multi-modal transportation facilities, intensification of land use, and a wide range of office and research uses.*
- (d) *Promote a high level of architectural and site design features that signify the commitment to innovation and investment through architecture with visual interest and unique identity, site design incorporating stewardship of natural resources, district layout and development supporting the pedestrian environment, and green building techniques demonstrating the commitment to sustainability.*

In addition to the general purposes, staff considered three specific issues to the Park while developing the RI zoning district. The first issue was to consider the need for supportive commercial uses and potential locations in the Park. The second issue is the appropriate balancing of commercial and industrial uses to match the vision of an innovation district of office and R&D uses supported by commercial. The third issues addresses how the vision of the Park's intended character can be supported through site design standards and design guidelines. These three issues were significant in influencing the draft structure and language of the zoning district and are discussed in more detail below (Attachment E Draft Language).

Commercial Locations

Commercial uses are potentially needed to serve the existing and expanded Park. Most of the Highway Oriented Commercial (HOC) area abutting the Park allows for retail and service uses, but it has been developed with office and hotel uses that are not convenient for daily needs. There are vacant properties adjacent to the Park that could support retail uses, such as the corner of Oakwood and Airport. However, the ISU Research Park Corporation would prefer to seek development of 4 acres along Airport Road for commercial uses similar to HOC and to seek creating a small node of potentially 20 acres of commercial in the south expansions area. (Attachment C Commercial Areas)

The draft RI zoning language accommodates commercial uses within the Hub Activity area with a different design expectation than that of typical HOC types of uses. **Staff has advised the Corporation to seek HOC zoning for the property along Airport Road rather than trying to rezone the 4-acre Airport Road property to RI and address this one site within the RI zoning district standards.** This recommendation is based on the different context of the Airport Road site as a mostly vehicular oriented site that is different than that intent of a walkable Hub area. If the Planning and Zoning Commission has a concern about the potential commercial locations that could be developed in the Park, it can be addressed at this time with direction on locations and the intent and structure of the proposed RI zoning.

Commercial and Industrial Use

The allowed RI industrial uses are similar to the range allowed within PI, with a major exception of not allowing for warehouse uses. The RI industrial uses are much more limited than what is permitted with General Industrial zoning district. This is intentional to meet the vision of allowing for intensification of uses and a mix of uses that can be complementary within the Park and are likely to be developed in a similar manner and with a similar design approach. Allowing for a wide range of general industrial uses and warehousing would not permit intensification and may be disruptive to the office and R&D uses desired for the area.

The RI does permit for more commercial uses within the Hub area than what is generally permitted within industrial zoning. The intent is that a zoning master plan would accompany any rezoning of property and identify where a Hub activity area is planned and would benefit from the broader allowance for commercial uses. The commercial uses are not permitted to be dispersed onto various lots. The Hub area is

planned for the expansion area on the west side of the Park (Attachment C). Within the allowance for commercial uses, there is a challenge to balance supportive services for industrial development and going too far and unintentionally creating a node of commercial services for a broad area beyond the Park. It's likely that for uses to flourish in the Hub area, they will need area support while the park is building out. The concern is that we are using the industrial land resource as efficiently as possible.

The Hub area is approximately 20 acres in size, anchored by a combined state of Iowa and ISU economic development 34,000 square foot office and conference building on a 4 acre site with public parking around the central square. The areas immediately adjacent to this building are planned to allow for commercial uses of retail, office, restaurant, entertainment, and potentially a childcare facility. Professional office uses such as medical, financial, or law would be allowed. The commercial buildings may be single purpose or mixed commercial uses on approximately 15 acres. Current language allows for this wide array of uses with no limit on individual or collective square footage in the Hub Area. This allows for some flexibility for the Research Park Corporation to seek out development opportunities. In deference to the general flexibility with RI, staff believes that some review of the Hub area commercial square footage may be appropriate at the time of property rezoning with the required master plan.

Development Standards and Design Guidelines

Development of each lot is subject to conformance with the development standards of RI as well as the other standards of Zoning Ordinance, e.g. parking lot screening, trash enclosures, parking ratios, and Article 5 definitions of use. The intensity of use outside of the Hub area is limited to .35 Floor Area Ratio (FAR). This is consistent with PI standards and matches the level of development contemplated by the traffic study for the Park. However, within the Hub area there is no limit on FAR to help support the vision of intensification and identity.

Building height is limited to 100 feet for all properties. Properties within the Hub area have minimum two-story building height requirement to help create the intended character and intensity of this area. While the Corporation supports the concept, they do have some concerns about the mandatory height requirement and the limits on flexibility of uses and development desires in the near term.

A substantial difference in site development standard for RI is a reduction in setbacks. PI was written to require wide minimum 50-foot setbacks that placed building far back from the street. Staff proposes a 30-foot setback along University Boulevard, but only a 10-foot setback along all other streets. The Hub area also includes a maximum setback of 20 feet for facades not facing University. Parking must be setback a minimum of 20 feet. Staff also supports a minimum of 10 foot setbacks along the rear and sides of sites to allow for more efficiency in layout of a site. Setbacks of 10 feet still allow for openings near properties lines and enough space for some landscaping and the location of utilities. Staff believes the reduced setbacks set a different character for the area and bringing uses closer to the street in support of pedestrians. With reduced setbacks, there should be greater expectation of design and orientation. This is accomplished through the general design guidelines included within the ordinance.

Parking requirements will follow City standards for the amount of parking, design, and location, with two exceptions. The RI zoning allows for the public parking within the Hub area to be counted towards minimum required parking for development in the Hub area without approval of shared or remote parking agreements. Staff also recommends limiting the visibility of parking by only allowing for one row of parking between a building and the street. This would result in most parking being situated along the side of the site or in the rear of the building. Staff believes this approach is supportive of bringing buildings closer to a street and promoting use of sidewalks and bike lanes in the Park. There is a trade off to this approach as it does limit some flexibility in the siting of a building, and it would make it difficult for a project to orient itself towards open space rather than the street. The Corporation's preference is to allow for parking between a building and the street, but not limit it to only one row.

Staff has included design guidelines for the RI zoning. Typically, Ames has applied design guidelines only in overlay areas where character of development is a priority. The Corporation has their own private covenants and the designs of buildings in the existing park are distinct from those of other industrial areas in the City. Even with these private covenants, staff believes use of general design guidelines is appropriate here to provide structure for review of projects and their consistency with the overall vision. The design guidelines focus on orientation of buildings and incorporation of high quality and diverse materials. There is no prescribed percentage for compliance. In practice this means there will be discretion at the staff level to judge project's consistency with the intent of the district. This will allow for some flexibility in design compared to writing quantitative guidelines or zoning standards about design. It does not mean that guidelines can be disregarded in the project review and only attempt to comply with zoning standards.

ALTERNATIVES:

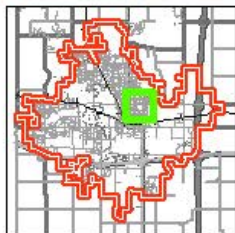
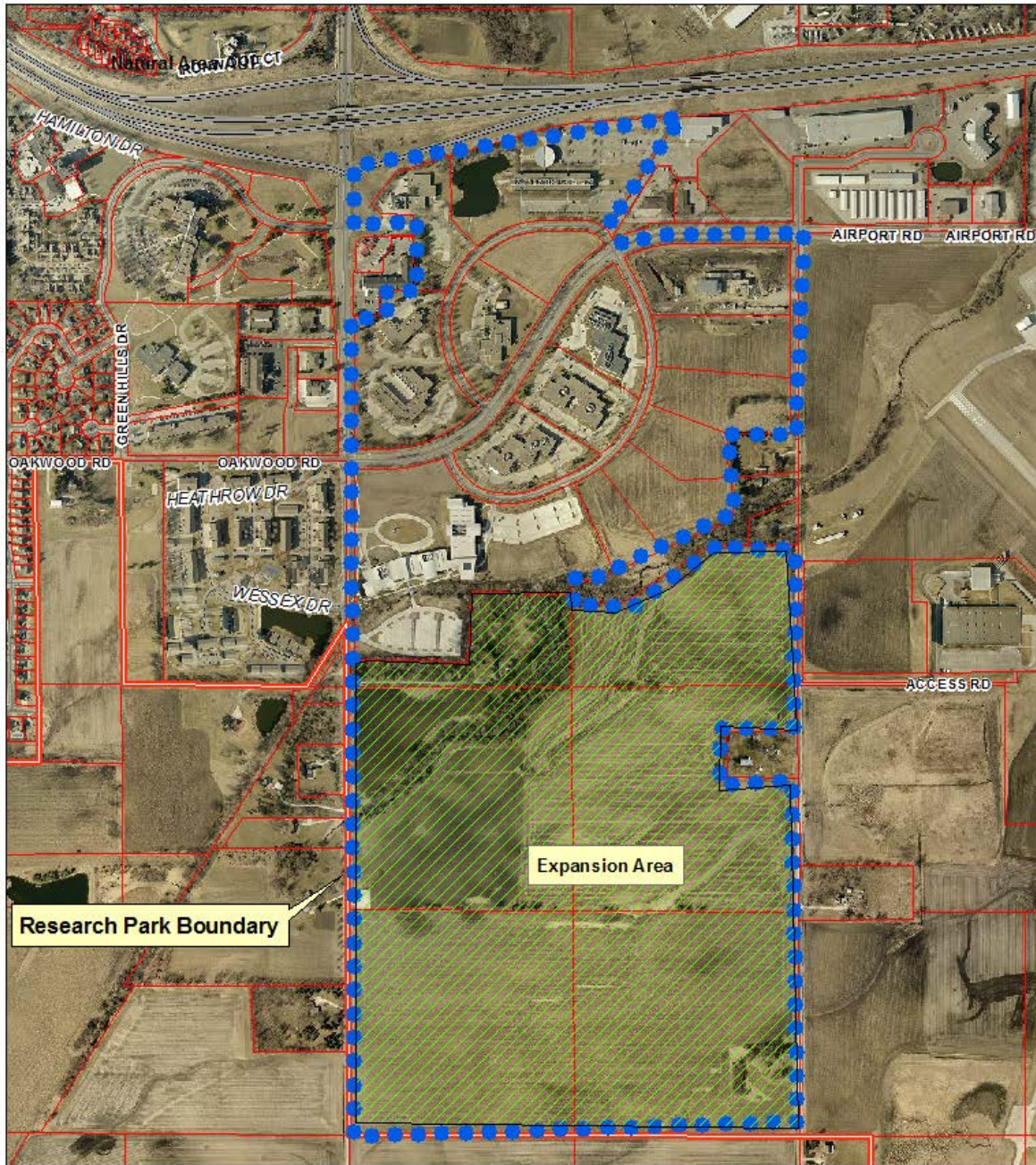
1. The Planning & Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council adopt the proposed amendment to Chapter 29 for creating the Research Park and Innovation Zoning District.
2. The Planning & Zoning Commission can recommend the City Council decline to adopt the RI Zoning District and continue to utilize the PI zoning district for the ISU Research Park.
3. The Planning & Zoning Commission can refer the proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance back to staff for specific further information or options.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The proposed RI Zoning District is tailored to specific needs and the vision for the ISU Research Park Expansion Area. The general approach to development standards and uses is a departure from the traditional Ames industrial zoning, but is necessary to help reach a goal of a modern multi-service environment for office and R&D uses. Staff believes the standards are supportive of the vision and provide a basic framework to reach the overall vision. This approach is consistent with the national trend to plan for Innovation Districts that focus on a mix of uses and intensity of uses that are supportive of interaction and collaboration desired by business in the fields of R&D.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Department of Planning and Housing that the Planning and Zoning Commission act in accordance with Alternative #1, which is to recommend that the City Council create the Research Park and Innovation Zoning District

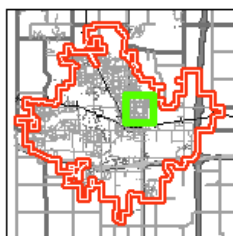
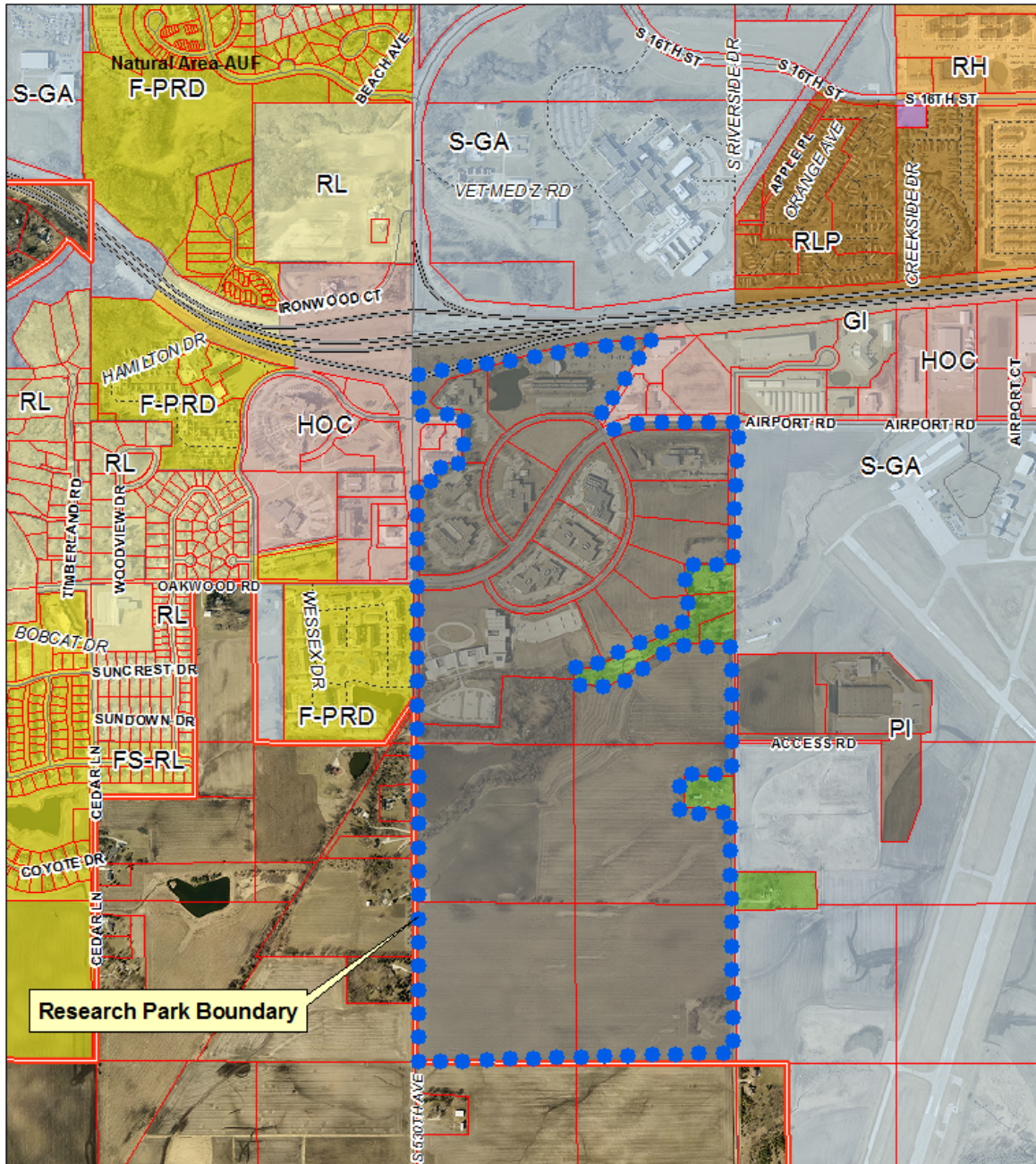
Attachment A



Location Map

0 0.0425 0.085 0.17 0.255 0.34 0.425 Miles

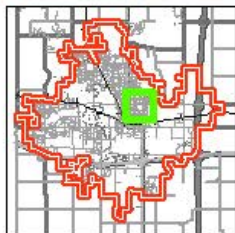
Attachment B



Zoning Map

0 0.050.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 Miles

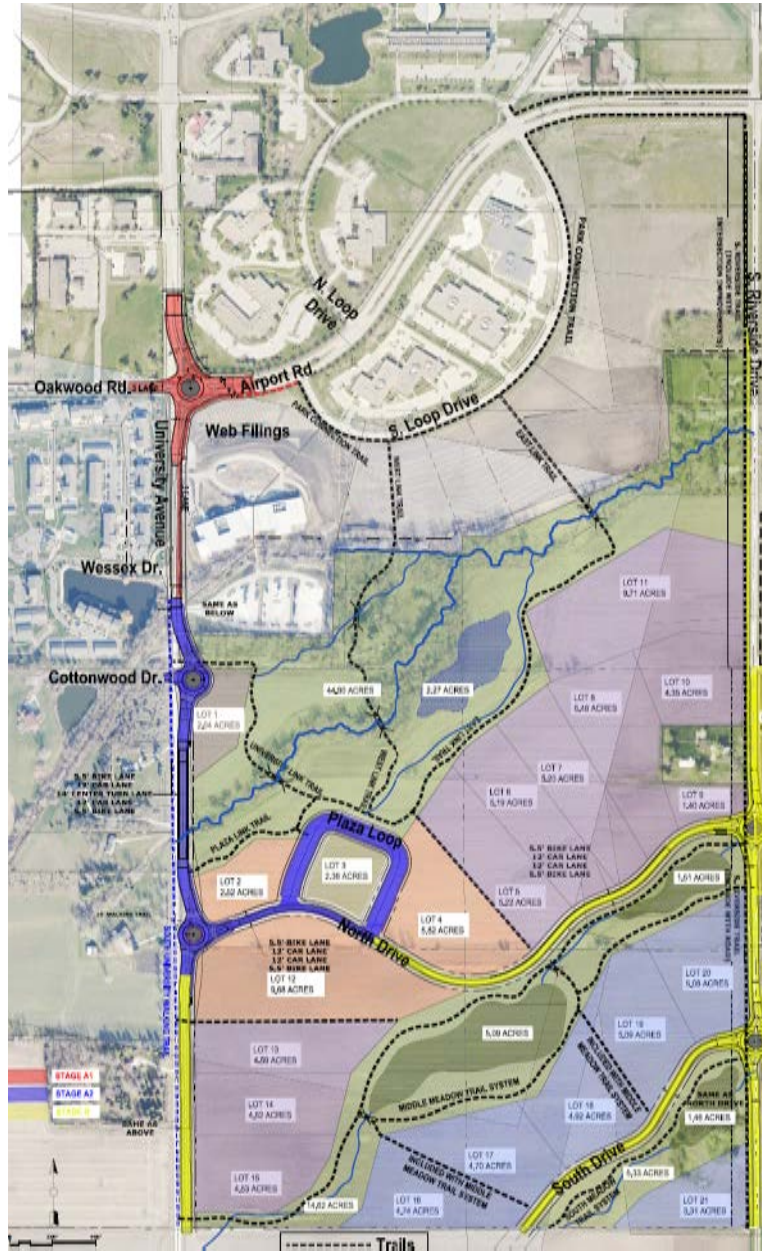
Attachment C



Expansion Area

0 0.0425 0.085 0.17 0.255 0.34 0.425 Miles

Attachment D



Expansion Area Development Concept

Attachment E

Research Park Innovation District (RI)

(1) **Purpose.** This District supports development of an integrated commercial service and concentrated employment area :

- (a) Allow for mixing of use and interaction of people to foster a collaborative environment;
- (b) Create a node of activity around the Hub of the district; and
- (c) Design development to promote the new innovation district by integrating multi-modal transportation facilities, intensification of land use, and a wide range of office and research uses.
- (d) Promote a high level of architectural and site design features that signify the commitment to innovation and investment through architecture with visual interest and unique identity, site design incorporating stewardship of natural resources, district layout and development supporting the pedestrian environment, and green building techniques demonstrating the commitment to sustainability.

(2) **Permitted Uses.** The RI Zoning District is to be established by the City Council through the requirements of 29.1507. Hub Activity Area uses may only be allowed for properties that are consistent with a City Council approved master plan accompanying a rezoning request.

The uses permitted in the RI Zone are set forth in Table XXXXX below:

**Table 29.XX
RI Zone Uses**

USE CATEGORY	STATUS	APPROVAL REQUIRED	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
RESIDENTIAL USES			
Group Living	N	--	--
Household Living	N	--	--
Short-term Lodgings	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
OFFICE USES	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
TRADE USES			
Retail Sales and Services - General	N	--	--
Retail Sales and Services - General-Located within Hub Activity Area	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
Retail Trade - Automotive, etc.	N	--	--
Restaurant -Located within Hub Activity Area- no drive throughs	Y	SDP Minor	--
Entertainment, Restaurant, Recreation Trade-Outside Hub Activity Area	N		
Small Production Facility	Y	SPU	ZBA
Recreation Trade-Within Hub Activity Area as part of multi-story building/ stand alone use requires Special Use Permit	Y	SDP Minor/ SPU	Staff/ZBA
Wholesale Trade	N	--	--
INDUSTRIAL USES			
Research and Development Facilities and Laboratories	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
Manufacturing and Processing - all uses except concrete batching and asphalt mixing; lumber and wood products manufacturing; manufactured homes and prefabricated structures manufacturing; printing and publishing; and rock crushing and screening	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
Warehouse and Freight Handling limited to: inter-modal transfer facilities, parcel services, regional postal distribution facilities, and wholesale distribution centers	N	SDP Minor	Staff
INSTITUTIONAL USES			
Colleges and Universities	N	--	--
Public Facilities and Services	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
Social Service Providers	N	--	--
Medical Centers	N	--	--
Parks and Open Areas (as designated in a Master Plan)	Y	SDP Minor	Staff

USE CATEGORY	STATUS	APPROVAL REQUIRED	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
Religious Institutions	N	--	--
Schools	N	--	--
TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND UTILITY USES			
Passenger Terminals	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
Basic Utilities- outside of the Hub Activity Area	Y	SDP Major	City Council
Commercial Parking	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
Personal Wireless Communication Facilities	Y	SP	ZBA
Radio and TV Broadcast Facilities	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
Rail Line and Utility Corridors	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
Railroad Yards	N	--	--
MISCELLANEOUS USES			
Commercial Outdoor Recreation	N	--	--
Child Day Care Facilities	Y	SDP Minor	Staff
Detention Facilities	N	--	--
Major Event Entertainment	N	--	--
Vehicle Service Facilities	N	--	--
Vehicle Repair	N	--	--

Y = Yes: permitted as indicated by required approval.
N = No: prohibited
SP = Special Use Permit required: See Section 29.1503
SDP Minor = Site Development Plan Minor: See Section 29.1502(3)
SDP Major = Site Development Plan Major: See Section 29.1502(4)
ZBA = Zoning Board of Adjustment

(Ord. No. 3595, 10-24-00)

(3) **Zone Development Standards.** The zone development standards applicable in the PI Zone are set forth in Table 29.902(3) below:

Table 29.XXX
Development Standards

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS	PI ZONE
Maximum FAR	.35 for areas outside of HUB Activity Area/ No limit within HUB Activity Area
Minimum Lot Area	One Acre
Minimum Lot Frontage	100 ft.
Minimum Building Setbacks: Street Lot Line University Ave Street Lot Line Side Lot Line Rear Lot Line Lot Line Abutting an Residential Zoned Lot	30 ft. 10 ft. 10 ft. 10 ft. 30 ft. rear
Maximum Building Setbacks for Principal Façade to XXX Street in HUB Activity Area	20 ft.
Landscaping in Setbacks Abutting an R Zoned Lot	20 ft. @ L3. See Section 29.403
Maximum Impervious Surface Coverage	70%
Minimum Landscaped Area	20%
Maximum Height	100 ft.
Parking Allowed Between Buildings and Streets	Yes, maximum of one double loaded aisle of parking parallel to street. Multiple building development on a lot may have additional parking between buildings and the street subject to Planning Director approval on the functional layout and access to the street and aesthetic compatibility with the design guidelines.
Parking Location	Parking at 90 degrees accessed from public right of way may count toward required on-site parking in Hub Activity Area. Parking must be setback a minimum of 20 feet from a street property line.
Drive-Through Facilities Permitted	No

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS	PI ZONE
Outdoor Display Permitted	No
Outdoor Storage Permitted-not between building and the street	Yes, See Section 29.405; Screened per Section 29.403(1)(c)
Trucks and Equipment Permitted	Yes

(Ord. No. 4094, 12-20-11)

(4) **Site Development Plan Requirements.**

(a) In addition to Site Development Plan submittals, a Use Analysis Report shall be prepared by the applicant that shows the following:

(i) Approximate number of employees;

(ii) Approximate utility needs and effect upon existing systems, e.g., projected water demand (Gallons Per Minute or Gallons Per Day), waste water generation (Gallons Per Day + Chemical oxygen Demand or Biochemical oxygen Demand), electricity demand (Kilowatts), storm water increase (Cubic Feet Per Second), solid waste generation (tons); and

(Ord. No. 3591, 10-10-00)

(iii) Possible nuisance factors and means for alleviating those factors, such as noise, odor, smoke, dust, or fumes, vibration, heat.

iv. Uses with a substantial inventory of hazardous materials, as regulated by the Ames Fire Department, shall be sited away from residential uses across University Boulevard.

(b) No Site Development Plan approval will be issued for any use in the RI District if the determination is made by the approving authority exercising independent judgment, that there is reason to believe that the proposed use or structure, as presented by the application, will create a nuisance in terms of diminished air quality, smoke, noise, toxic matter, odor, vibration, glare, sewage waste, water quality, street system capacity, heat or other condition detrimental to the public health and safety or reasonable use, enjoyment and value of other properties; or diminish the quality or quantity of any utility service presently provided by the City. Furthermore, no approval or permit shall be issued unless there is compliance with all other applicable City, state and federal regulations.

29.XXX Design Guidelines

The goal is to create a development that acknowledges its natural surroundings, develops a human scale, and provides innovative contemporary architectural designs which harmonize with the environment, express individuality and promote worker health, wellness and productivity. Site Plan approvals must be found to conform to site development standards and to satisfy the design guidelines. Guidelines are to be applied with discretion to adapt to individual site needs while meeting the general goal.

Site Design Concepts

- Use site design to locate buildings in manner that is supportive of the pedestrian environment
- Locate active uses and employee intensive uses towards the streets
- Coordinate building and parking in manner that is supportive of a transition to trails and pedestrian areas.
- Extend walkways to both public streets and trail system
- Use differentiation of materials at driveways and walkways to enhance the pedestrian crossing. This may include use of brick, pavers, stamped asphalt, art, or other features identify space and creating interest.
- Coordinate shared access points for lots to reduce driveway intersections along bike and pedestrian facilities

- Locate support areas such as mechanical areas and storage areas away from pedestrian areas and behind the principal building.

Landscape Design

- Use landscape design to support sustainable site features of stormwater treatment and parking lot shading
- Locate landscape areas in manner that are complementary to adjacent open space areas in types of vegetation and planting.
- Incorporate vegetation that provides for screening of storage and equipment areas from trails and streets.
- Consider enhancements to pedestrian environments with shading of walkways and creating visual interest with art, trellis, gathering spaces, and interesting vegetation.

Architectural Design

- Orient the main elevations of building with respect to nearby streets, accentuate the main entrance with architectural elements or projections.
- Locate office and active uses at street sides of buildings; utilize high levels of glazing to identify these areas of activity and interest.
- Building massing should distinguish building components through variations in height, building relief, and exterior materials. This may include using the function aesthetic of manufacturing or research process of the business to accent a building design.
- Building design should incorporate principles of differentiation of base, middle, and top elements to create building identity.